Pakistan has denied that Sheikh Rashid had been running terrorist training camps.

Recruitment of drivers by KGL

*270. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS AND INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the renewed activities of Kuwait and Gulf Link Transport Company of Kuwait to recruit drivers and other categories of workers for Iraq; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to safeguard Indian citizens from being lured into hazardous employment in Iraq?

THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH): (a) and (b) :

1. There have been Press reports about M/s. Kuwait and Gulf Link Transport Co., Kuwait (KGL) recruiting truck and trailer drivers for Iraq.

2. KGL had been placed in the Prior Approval Category (PAC) in 2001. It was removed from the PAC list in Nov. 2004 on the recommendation of the Embassy of India, Kuwait.

3. In the wake of recent Press reports about the activities of KGL, all Protectors of Emigrants have been directed not to grant emigration clearance at their level w.e.f. 22.07.2005 to Indian workers proposed to be deployed by KGL but refer the proposals to the Protector General of Emigrants.

4. Further, the practice of a specific endorsement "NOT VALID FOR TRAVEL TO IRAQ" on the passports of workers going to Kuwait and Jordan, has been extended to all workers going to all Gulf countries.

Country among maritime nations

*271. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether despite the long coastline, India is not rated among the top 20 maritime nations; and